



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 31, 2014

Soldier Missing From Vietnam War Accounted For

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, missing from the Vietnam War, who died in captivity in 1967, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Staff Sgt. James L. Van Bendegom, 19, of Kenosha, Wis., will be buried Nov. 11, 2014, in Kenosha, Wis. On July 12, 1967, Van Bendegom was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, as a member of a patrol that was overrun by enemy forces in South Vietnam, near the Cambodian border. During this attack, Van Bendegom was captured by enemy forces and returning POWs later reported that he died from wounds sustained during the attack.

On March 14, 1986, a Vietnamese national in a refugee camp in Thailand, turned over to U.S. custody, remains of what were purported to be an American service member. Information provided by the Vietnamese national did not correlate with any unaccounted for service members.

In mid 2000, due to the advances in technology, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) re-examined the remains and determined that there was a possibility for identification.

In the identification of Van Bendegom, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including two forms of DNA analysis; mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome Short Tandem Repeat DNA (Y-STR), which matched his brothers.

Today there are 1,639 American service members that are still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO website at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call 703-699-1169.

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